Opening Statement
Chairman Ken Calvert
Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee
Committee on Science
U. S. House of Representatives
Hearing*: Part II: The National Academy of Sciences' Decadal Plan for Aeronautics: A Blueprint for NASA?*

Today we are holding the second of two hearings on NASA's efforts to refocus and to reshape the Nation's civil aeronautics program. The first hearing was held earlier this year on July 18. At that time we heard from four witnesses representing industry, academia, and the National Research Council. The hearing focused on two recently published reports by the National Research Council. We asked our panel at the earlier hearing to contrast and compare the recommendations of the reports with what they understand NASA is actually doing in its efforts to reshape and to strengthen its aeronautics research and development program.

Today, the Subcommittee is honored to have Dr. Lisa Porter, NASA Associate Administrator for the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, and General William Hoover, Co-Chair of the National Research Council's Steering Committee, which produced the first-ever *Decadel Survey of Civil Aeronautics.* I want to welcome them and to thank them for appearing before our Subcommittee on this subject so important to our Nation.

Federally-sponsored aeronautics research began in earnest in 1915 with the establishment of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory. In the years since that time, Langley and its sister aeronautics research centers at Glenn, Ames, and Dryden, have produced enormous technical and intellectual advances to our understanding of manned flight. Their work is far from over. I have visited each of these NASA Centers except for Langley, which is on my schedule to visit in November. Each Center is impressive with its intellectual agenda and the great projects that are being undertaken by each. The research at these Centers has enabled this country to achieve supremacy in military and civil aeronautics-related technology that continues to this day.

Having said that, during the past decade, the level of federal investment in civil aeronautics research and development has seriously declined. In FY 2007, aeronautics R&D at NASA will account for less than 5% of the agency budget. While it may not be entirely fair to portray this level of funding as an indication of NASA's commitment to aeronautics research, there is no doubt that aeronautics is working in a very constrained budget atmosphere.

Given these trends, the questions we need to ask ourselves is whether we, as a country, are jeopardizing our Nation's future capability to continue to develop and to produce state-of-the-art aircraft that are safe, efficient, and environmentally benign. Equally important, are we competitive with foreign-manufactured aircraft? Will our air traffic management system be able to accommodate in a timely way, the projected growth in the air traffic? The answers hinge on NASA's ability to devote the necessary resources, and on NASA's ability to put in place the best strategies and programs.

The Decadal Survey of Civil Aeronautics is intended to offer NASA strategic guidance for its aeronautics R&D program. It identifies four high priority strategic objectives. It is an excellent report and one that should be very useful to NASA.

At our July hearing, witnesses agreed with the Decadel Survey's recommendations. They also suggested that NASA needs to increase its aeronautics budget, they stressed the importance to mature promising technologies to a level that would enable adoption by other government agencies or industry. They urged NASA to consult and to work with industry on a routine basis and to increase the amount of funding for external research.

I look forward to hearing the testimony of our witnesses on these subjects and I turn now to our Subcommittee Ranking Member, Rep. Udall, for his opening statement.

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